

Fearing God and Heeding His Word

by Chuck Smith

The sermon emphasizes the importance of fearing God, recognizing His authority, and the consequences of turning away from Him.

Duration: 25:03

Scripture: Isaiah 8:11, Isaiah 9:1-2, Isaiah 9:6-7, Isaiah 9:12, Isaiah 9:19

Topics: "Fear Of God"

Description

In this sermon, Pastor Chuck Smith warns about the enticing and pleasant nature of sin, but emphasizes that it ultimately leads to barrenness, captivity, misery, despair, and darkness. He highlights the influence of the pagan invasion, particularly in Hollywood and the Western world, and mentions a pilot program in Los Angeles public schools that teaches children how to contact spirit guides. Pastor Chuck emphasizes the importance of fearing God and heeding His word, as God is determined to teach us important lessons for our own good. He explains that God may start with light reprimands, but if we persist in disobedience, He will use stronger methods to teach us.

Transcript

Oh, let the Son of God enfold you With His Spirit and His love Let Him fill your heart and satisfy your soul
Oh, let Him have the things that hold you And His Spirit like a dove Will descend upon your life And make you whole
Now, in rejecting the help of God, they have opened themselves to be destroyed by the enemies. For the Lord spoke thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed me that I should not walk in the way of the people, saying, Say ye not a confederacy to all of them, to whom this people shall say a confederacy? Neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid. Now, because he was speaking against the alliance with Assyria, which the king was proposing and had initiated, he was actually, in speaking against the actions of the government, was accused of being treasonous.

And this word confederacy could be translated treason, and this was the accusation that was being made against him. And so, because he is going against government policy, he's being accused of this treasonous action. But don't be afraid of them, God is saying.

But sanctify the Lord of hosts Himself. That is, be honest with God and be, honor God Himself. You don't have to worry about man.

Honor God. Let Him be your fear. Be in fear of God.

And let Him be your dread. Jesus said, don't fear those who can kill your body, but after that have no power over you. But fear Him rather who, after your body is killed, is able to cast both your soul and spirit into hell.

I say unto you, fear ye Him. Now, God is saying to Isaiah pretty much the same, don't be afraid of these men accusing you of treason. You be afraid of God.

And sanctify God. And He shall be for a sanctuary. That is, if you honor God, then God will be a place of defense for you.

God will be your defense. And that's the glorious thing. God becomes a sanctuary for His people.

But, for the Jews, He will be a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense to both the house of Israel and a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Now, we're dealing with prophecies of Jesus Christ. Seventh chapter, He is referred to as the virgin conceiving and bringing a son.

His name be called Emmanuel. Here in the eighth chapter, the prophecy of Jesus has to do with a stumbling stone, a rock of offense. As you get into the New Testament, you find Paul, how that Jesus to the Jew is a stumbling stone, a rock of offense.

Peter makes reference to this in his first epistle. And Paul also makes mention of it in Romans chapter 9. And so Paul makes mention of it twice, how that Jesus is to the Jew a stumbling stone, a rock of offense. Peter speaks about Him, the stone which was said of not by the builders.

It has become the chief cornerstone. But to the Jew, He's a stumbling stone. The interesting thing is that Jesus is still a stumbling stone to the Jew.

They still stumble over Him. He's still a rock of offense to them. But to us who believe in Him, He's a sanctuary.

He's our place of rest, our place of safety, hiding in the rock, finding refuge in the rock. And it's amazing how Jesus can be so many things to so many people. To preaching of the cross, to those that perish, foolishness.

But to us who are saved thereby, it is the power of God unto salvation. To the Greeks, foolishness. To the Jews, a stumbling block of offense.

To us, glorious salvation. Many among them will stumble and fall. They'll be broken, they'll be snared, and they will be taken.

So, bind up this testimony and seal the law among my disciples. So, take and make the scroll. Bind up the testimony.

Seal this law among the disciples. And I will wait upon the Lord that hides His face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for Him. So, the general rejection, but those that are waiting, looking.

Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me are for signs and wonders in Israel from the Lord of hosts which dwells in Mount Zion. So, He and His children were to be for signs and wonders. The names of the children, significant.

They shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep and chirp and mutter. Should not a people seek unto their God? Why would you seek the dead to find out about life? Now, you say, well, that sure applies to a different age and to a different people. Oh, does it? What about this new age channeling where people pay several hundred dollars for a weekend to listen to Ramtha, a 35,000-year-old wise man of the past, speak through the channeler? I mean, this stuff is big stuff in Hollywood and around the world.

The new age movement, this pagan invasion of our western world, is powerful, it is strong. It has infiltrated our nation deeper than you imagine or suppose. You can't dream how far-reaching is the effect of the pagan invasion.

In a pilot program last year in the Los Angeles public schools, a pilot program that they're testing its effectiveness with the kids, and if it is successful, they plan to inaugurate it within the California state school system. This pilot program teaches the children how to contact spirit guides. And they tell the children to just relax.

They turn the lights down low, and they say, now just start breathing deeply and feel very relaxed and very comfortable and like you were lying on the beach and it's just a lovely day and all. And now as you are looking around, look within yourself, and you will find within yourself there is a house, and in that house there dwells a very wise old man. And this wise old man has the answers for your problems.

And whenever you're in trouble, you can just stop and look in the house and you can talk to this wise man and he will guide you. If you're having problems with your test, just seek the guidance of this wise man who lives in the house inside of you. And they're teaching the children how to make contact with spirit guides.

Now that's in modern day USA. Los Angeles. In the present school curriculum.

That isn't 2700 years ago and a group of people who were superstitious and backwards and believed in spirits and spirit guides and all. That's something that is happening today. They are still seeking to the dead to find wisdom for life.

They're going to those who chirp and mutter and peep and they go into the gibberish and all and then these voices speaking out supposedly with the wisdom of the past. And so the rebuke for those who are seeking familiar spirits. You ought to be seeking to the law of God and to the testimony of God.

And if they speak not according to the word of God, it's because they have no light in them. They are living and abiding in darkness. And they shall pass through it, hardly be steady and hungry and it shall come to pass within they shall be hungry, they shall fret themselves and they will curse their king and their God and they will look upward.

Now they're going to go into captivity as they're being carried away captive through the wilderness. And they're hungry and they're thirsty. And here they are captives.

Actually when the Assyrians led them away captive, they put hooks through their lips and they pulled them like a dog on a leash with this hook through their lips so that you weren't tempted to bolt and run. And so as they were leading them, no water, no food. Isaiah is warning they're going to curse the king who led them into this sin that brought their destruction.

They will curse their king but also they curse their God. Now that's the tragic thing is that so many times when people have turned their backs on God and God's judgment begins to fall upon them because of their sin, rather than repenting of their sin, they curse God for the misery of the woe that they've experienced because of their sin. And they start to blame God for their miseries.

We find that that will be so in the great tribulation when God begins to pour out His judgments upon the earth and these horrible judgments begin to fall. The trumpet judgments begin to sound and the subsequent events upon the earth that men will curse the God of heaven. Neither will they repent of their fornications and their sorceries and their blasphemies and all.

And so here is the prophecy of this time when God's judgment has fallen and they're being taken away captive. They're cursing their king and their God. And they shall look unto the earth and behold there is nothing but trouble and darkness, dimness and anguish.

And they shall be driven to darkness. The horrible result and consequence of sin leading them to despair, leading them to hopelessness, leading them to captivity. And you need to remember this when you become attracted by sin, you become allured by sin.

It seems so enticing, it seems so beautiful, it seems so pleasant. Remember that it will ultimately lead you into barrenness. It will lead you into captivity.

It will bring you into misery, despair and hopelessness. And it will drive you ultimately into darkness. And Jesus said the ultimate result, they will be cast into outer darkness where there is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth.

Sin and its consequences. Now a person before he gets involved in sin, when he is at that stage of excitement and curiosity and you think, oh my, you know, doesn't that look good? You need to consider the end results. Because they're always destructive.

It is always despairing. Ultimate darkness. And so these are terribly dark days having been conquered by the Assyrian forces who were extremely cruel.

History tells us that quite often they physically mutilated them. Cutting off their ears, cutting out their tongues, cutting off their noses, physically mutilating the bodies of their prisoners. And thus being taken captive by the Assyrians was sometimes worse than death.

And for this reason, many times in history when a city was surrounded by the Assyrians, the entire populace of the city would commit suicide rather than becoming a captive because of the fear of the torture and the mutilation of the captives. And so he is predicting the fall and at this time Assyria is already moving in its conquest of the northern kingdom. And there is nothing but darkness.

He speaks of the dimness in the last verse there of anguish. So the first verse of chapter 9 ties directly with the last verse of chapter 8. And remember, originally there were no chapter distinctions. The scrolls of Isaiah just go right on.

They don't have chapters and verses. They just continue on. And the chapter and verse distinguishing the separation is good in that it helps you in referencing a passage of scripture, but it is bad many times in that you read the chapter and you think, well, that's the end of the chapter and so you quit.

And then when you start the new chapter, you don't always see the relationship to the previous chapter. And we have a tendency to think, well, that's the end of the chapter, that's the end of the thought, when many times it is a continuing thought that is carried right on through and such is the case here. Chapter 9 is tied with chapter 8. He speaks of the dimness of anguish.

Nevertheless, the dimness, so tied just right to it, the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, and afterward did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea beyond the Jordan in the Galilee of the nations. Now, God sort of gave them a warning. They went through some difficult times, times of real hardship and difficulty, but they failed to repent.

They failed to turn to God and thus God then dealt with them in a more severe way. God is merciful even in judgment and God always gives to us the opportunity to repent. God does not afflict willingly, the scripture tells us.

In a sense, you might say that God is a poor disciplinarian. He's soft. He doesn't afflict us according to what we deserve.

The psalmist recognized that, that we deserve much worse than what God gives to us, but God is gracious even in judgment and sometimes he allows things to happen which are bad, which are only a foretaste of the worst things that will happen if we do not repent and turn. There are sort of just warnings of God to turn from your wickedness. Now, I have often said that there are important lessons that we need to learn and God intends that we learn these lessons because they are important to our own welfare.

We have to know these things, just like there are certain things that your children need to know, important lessons they need to learn. Their life depends on it. Now, there are many important things that we need to learn because our lives depend on it.

And God is determined that we're going to learn. And as he is training us, maybe in the beginning it's just sort of a light reprimand in hopes that we will use good judgment and we'll see the danger and the folly of it. But if we persist, as did the nation of Israel, then God becomes stronger and stronger in the methods that he uses to teach those important lessons.

And so, their affliction was rather light at the first, but it was a foreshadowing of that which was to come if they did not change. God has important lessons that you need to know, that you must learn, and if you don't learn the easy way, you'll learn the hard way. For there is always an easy way and a hard way to learn things.

And if we are stubborn, then we'll learn the hard way. We'll return with more of our verse-by-verse venture through the Bible in our next broadcast. As Pastor Chuck continues to guide us through the fascinating book of Isaiah.

And we do hope you'll make plans to join us. But right now, I'd like to remind you that if you'd like to secure a copy of today's message, simply order Isaiah chapter 8, verse 11 when visiting the wordfortoday.org. And while there, we encourage you to browse the many additional biblical resources by Pastor Chuck. You can also subscribe to the Word for Today podcast or sign up for our email subscription.

Once again, all this can be found at the wordfortoday.org. If you wish to call, our toll-free number is 1-800-272-WORD. And our office hours are Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Pacific Time. Again,

that's 1-800-272-9673.

For those of you preferring to write, our mailing address is The Word for Today, P.O. Box 8000, Costa Mesa, California, 92628. And now, on behalf of The Word for Today, we'd like to thank all of you who share in supporting this ministry with your prayers and financial support. And be sure to join us again next time as Pastor Chuck continues his verse-by-verse study through the Bible.

That's right here, on the next edition of The Word for Today. And now, once again, here's Pastor Chuck with today's closing comments. Lord, we thank You that You have brought us by Your Spirit to the feet of Jesus Christ, where we humbly bow and confess our sins and acknowledge Him as our Lord.

And our heart's desire, Lord, is to walk in the light as You were in the light, that we might have this wonderful fellowship with each other as Your blood cleanses us from all of our sin. Lord, make us righteous even as You are righteous. Make us pure, Lord, even as You are pure.

Help us, Lord, to forsake sin in every form, that we might follow hard after righteousness, that we might be pleasing, Lord, to You. In Jesus' name, amen. It's with great honor that The Word for Today would like to present Pastor Chuck Smith's book entitled, Prayer, Our Glorious Privilege.

With great clarity, Pastor Chuck masterfully taught the principles of praying to God our Father and emphasized the power that belongs to each one of us when we rely on the Holy Spirit to guide and nurture our prayer lives. I want to encourage you to pick up a copy of Pastor Chuck's book, Prayer, Our Glorious Privilege, and study it to put these biblical principles into practice. Read this book and come to the most amazing realization that prayer is the most potent weapon in your spiritual arsenal and use it with great promise and hope.

For when you begin a life of prayer, you begin a great adventure. To order a copy of this book in print or to download a digital copy, please visit thewordfortoday.org or call The Word for Today at 800-272-9673. This program has been sponsored by The Word for Today in Costa Mesa, California.

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